

Yesterday, from the floor of the U.S. House, [Congressman Pence responded](#) to a recently articulated argument that Republicans were in favor of "doing nothing."

Today, the *Washington Post* [also picks up on this dialogue](#) , noting that

*President Obama likes to portray the battle over the economic stimulus package that passed the Senate on Tuesday as a stark choice between his approach and that of those who would "do nothing."*

*"Nothing is not an option. You didn't send me to Washington to do nothing," Obama told a gathering of 1,500 here on Tuesday, bringing the crowd to its feet as he campaigned for passage of the more than \$800 billion package.*

*The president used the same language Monday in his first prime-time news conference, suggesting that lawmakers who opposed his prescription want the government to ignore the deepening economic crisis.*

*"There seems to be a set of folks who -- I don't doubt their sincerity -- who just believe that we should do nothing," he said.*

*But in truth, few of those involved in the stimulus debate are suggesting that the government should not take action to aid the cratering economy.*

*Many of the president's fiercest congressional critics support a stimulus package of similar size but think it should be built around a much higher proportion of tax cuts than new spending. Others have called for a plan that is half the size of the one headed for a House-Senate conference -- still massive by historical standards.*

*Even those who think that no new government spending is necessary do not advocate a stand-still approach. A newspaper ad by the Cato Institute, signed by 250 economists, argued for removing "impediments to work, saving, investment and production" and said that "lower tax rates and a reduction in the burden of government are the best ways of using fiscal policy to*

*boost growth."*

***"I don't know of a single Republican in the House or Senate who thinks Congress should do nothing in the wake of this recession ,"*** [\*Rep. Mike Pence \(R-Ind.\) said Tuesday\*](#) . ***"We want to do something that will work***  
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*But if Republicans express frustration about Obama's rhetorical device, they need only look back to the man he succeeded for precedent. George W. Bush was proficient at setting up straw men when arguing for his policies, only to tear down the positions of those phantom opponents as irresponsible, unworkable or downright shameful in comparison with his own.*

Ed Whelan notices this same thing at [The Corner](#) , as does Ramesh Ponnuru at *The Washington Post*  
's  
[Right Matters](#)  
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